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Viewing cable 09QUITO829, FOL Turnover Complete, but National Assembly Continues to

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09QUITO829**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09QUITO829	2009-09-19 00:08	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Quito

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/08/1/1355/cable-226031.html>

VZCZCXYZ0009
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0829/01 2620008
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 190008Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0070
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH J2
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/USSOUTHAF DAVIS MONTHAN AFB AZ
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0010
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0014
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP LIMA 0019
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000829

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2029/09/18
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: FOL Turnover Complete, but National Assembly Continues to Irritate

REF: QUITO 616; QUITO 391

CLASSIFIED BY: Heather M. Hodges...

id: 226031
date: 9/19/2009 0:08
refid: 09QUITO829
origin: Embassy Quito
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination: 09QUITO391|09QUITO616
header:
VZCZCXYZ0009
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0829/01 2620008
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 190008Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0070
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH J2
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
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RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP LIMA 0019
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000829

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2029/09/18

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SUBJECT: FOL Turnover Complete, but National Assembly Continues to Irritate

REF: QUITO 616; QUITO 391

CLASSIFIED BY: Heather M. Hodges, Ambassador, State Department;
REASON: 1.4(A), (D)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The U.S. Air Force turned the Forward Operating Location (FOL) facilities over to the Ecuadorian Air Force on September 18, concluding ten years constructing and utilizing the FOL for counternarcotics surveillance flights. GOE senior officials celebrated what FM Falconi called a "triumph for national sovereignty and peace." Meanwhile, the Prosecutor General's Office summoned former president Gutierrez and others for questioning for allegedly allowing the U.S. military to sink Ecuadorian vessels and commit other crimes. The National Assembly plans further investigation. End Summary.

FAREWELL TO THE FOL

¶2. (C) During a brief ceremony at Ecuador's Eloy Alfaro Air Base in Manta, FM Fander Falconi, Defense Minister Javier Ponce, and Coordinating Minister for Internal and External Security Miguel Carvajal marked what they considered the "recapture" of Ecuadorian sovereignty. GOE officials apparently chose in their remarks not to charge the FOL at the event with boat sinkings and human rights violations. According to a MFA press release, FM Falconi asked his listeners not to forget that "today is the moment of the Grand

Fatherland, an epoch of profound and complex transformation when a Latin America-oriented vision crosses the continent and rejects all forms of tutelage that seeks to promote relations based on subordination." He alleged that the "base" (sic) obeyed a strategy of military control, meaning by the U.S. Falconi faulted former GOE officials for their failure to allow debate by the Ecuadorian people before the agreement was concluded in 1999, and also for not securing approval by the plenary of the then Congress (only the International Relations Commission considered the agreement at that time).

13. (C) Over the past week the planned signing over of the FOL morphed from a closed door meeting of mid-level officials to a ceremony complete with GOE ministerial participation. U.S. officials decided not to make themselves part of a media circus and did not attend the GOE event. In fact, we were not invited. Instead Military Group commander COL Robert Gaddis signed the necessary turnover documents and had them delivered and then signed by the Ecuadorian Air Force Area Defense Commander, Gen. Alonso Espinosa, prior to the GOE's ceremony, thereby meeting our legal requirement. The U.S. Air Force's 478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron (EOS) held an inactivation ceremony at a nearby hotel for the FOL the morning of September 18 that included members of the 12th Air Force and Embassy Quito, but not the GOE or Ecuadorian military.

14. (SBU) Mid-day newscasts covered the GOE event, with several suggesting that the Ecuadorian Government "forgot to invite the Americans" to the ceremony, and one noting FOL contributions to the community. Each featured a different minister with his take on events, with Defense Minister Ponce referring to an investigation into an alleged "secret accord" (apparently a reference to the Operational Procedures for Boarding and Inspecting Vessels), FM Falconi focusing on Ecuador's relations with Colombia, and Carvajal tepidly praising the positive nature of the transition and turnover process.

PROSECUTOR GENERAL INITIATED INVESTIGATION

15. (SBU) According to the press, the now defunct Legislative Commission's International Relations Commission is planning to release its report (reftel) at a concert in Manta the evening of September 18 celebrating the FOL turnover. The report alleges thousands of deaths, human rights violations, and sinkings of fishing boats caused by the FOL.

16. (C) The Prosecutor General's Office has already moved forward with investigation of the report's unsubstantiated allegations. In August it summoned former president Lucio Gutierrez (runner-up in the April 26 elections this year), as well as two foreign ministers that served under Gutierrez, to appear. They are being investigated for covering up acts of piracy allegedly committed against Ecuadorians and Ecuadorian-flagged vessels which the summons claims were intercepted, destroyed, or sunk in Ecuadorian territorial waters or in international waters by vessels of the North American (sic) navy.

17. (C) The new National Assembly International Relations Commission president, Fernando Bustamante, told the Ambassador on September 18 that his Committee needed to continue looking "politically" into events surrounding the FOL, including Ecuadorian politicians who approved the agreement, and the alleged human rights violations. When the Ambassador suggested such actions would be only a witchhunt, Bustamante tried (unconvincingly) to convince her that the process would be fair.

COMMENT

18. (C) The USG can be very proud of what it has accomplished at the FOL over the last ten years, as well as ensuring the transition process over the past six months did not become a crippling bone of contention. We behaved graciously in leaving many items at the FOL (valued at \$1.4 million) behind for the Ecuadorian Air Force or local charities, when the only requirement in the agreement was the turnover of the installations. We hope this will pay dividends as we seek to maintain a constructive relationship with the Correa government and the Ecuadorian military, particularly in the anti-narcotics fight. We do have some concern about the National Assembly's plans for continued investigation of the ridiculous allegations against the USG. The Prosecutor General's investigation is of less concern since there will be a greater need in a legal proceeding for firm evidence.

HODGES

=====CABLE ENDS=====